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ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

DELIVERED IN GERARD HALL, JUNE 2, 1847,

(THE EVENING PRECEDING COMMENCEMENT DAY,)

BY

HON. JOHN Y. MASON, L. L. D.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY J. AND G. S. GIDEON.

1847.

CORRESPONDENCE.

At a meeting of the Alumni Association of the University of North Carolina, held in Gerard Hall on the evening of the 2nd June, 1847, it was unanimously resolved, on motion of the President of the University, immediately after the delivery of the annual address by the Hon. John Y. Mason :

“That the thanks of the Alumni Association be presented to Secretary Mason, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of his address for publication.”

His Excellency Gov. Graham, the Rev. Prof. Green, and the Hon. Judge Battle were appointed a committee to carry this resolution into effect.

CHAPEL HILL, *June 3d*, 1847.

SIR : The undersigned have been appointed a committee to tender to you the grateful acknowledgments of the Alumni Association of this University for the very able, interesting, and instructive address which you delivered in Gerard Hall last evening, and to request a copy for publication.

With the highest regard, we are, yours, &c.,

WILL. A. GRAHAM,

WILL. M. GREEN,

WILL. H. BATTLE.

To the Hon. JOHN Y. MASON, present.

CHAPEL HILL, *June 3d*, 1847.

GENTLEMEN : I have received your esteemed favor, in which, as a committee, you tender to me the acknowledgments of the Alumni Association for the address which I had the honor to deliver in Gerard Hall last evening. Happy in having met the wishes of the Association, and deferring to their judgment of the merits of a production on which you have kindly expressed so favorable an opinion, I will comply with your request, and transmit to you a copy of the address so soon as I can prepare the manuscript for publication.

With the highest respect and regard,

Your obd't servant and friend,

J. Y. MASON.

MESSRS. WM. A. GRAHAM,

WILL. M. GREEN,

WILL. H. BATTLE.

Chapel Hill.

13434

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSOCIATION:

In appearing before you to-day, while I regret that your invitation had not found one possessed of more leisure than I have had in which to meet its requirements, I am glad of the opportunity which has thus been afforded me, to testify my continued interest in my *Alma Mater*, and my sincere regard for those great purposes of science and of virtue which it is the fortunate office of an American University to promote.

After intervals of absence—some of them embracing more than a quarter of a century—we visit again, mindful yet of our literary brotherhood, the cherished scenes of our youthful studies, and renew for a few brief hours, amid the fragrant memorials of Chapel Hill, our ancient companionship of letters, and our old associations of classic life. Turning aside from our accustomed pursuits, we exchange the greetings of friendship in halls long sacred to religion and to truth; and before the altars of our early worship, we gather fresh motives of gratitude to the venerable Institution whose virtues they commemorate. We surrender ourselves to the mild influences of the day and the occasion. We forget the discords of professional strife; the hard competitions of business; the feverish thirst for fame: and hushing all the thousand voices of party zeal, we bow ourselves in unresisting submission to the *divinity of the place*.

In such influences we find our best preparation for the Anniversary which we celebrate. It is a festival less of the head than of the heart. It has more concern with generous impulses and warm

affections, than with the cold deductions of reason, or the dry speculations of metaphysics. It is wisely intended, not so much for the exhibition of hoarded knowledge and the discussions of abstruse thought, as for the promotion of kind feeling, the strengthening of good resolves, the awakening and quickening of a spirit of improvement in ourselves and in others. It brings together, from remote places and from various paths, those whose only memories in common cluster around this seat of learning; and it thus perpetuates attachments which might otherwise lie buried for ever in the dust of years. In this view of its character, it claims the rewards of patriotism, no less than the regards of friendship; and strengthens our union as citizens, by reviving our connection as students. The bonds which hold together our extended confederacy of States, are not those alone which are to be read in written constitutions and gathered from the enactments of legal codes; but those, rather, which are found in the interchange of social kindness; in the attractions of literary intercourse; and in the manifold associations which spring from the communions of religion and the pursuits of business. Every institution, therefore, which, like our own Society, gathers its members at frequent periods from distant sections and different States, forms a new link in that most important chain of causes, upon which we must chiefly rely, under Providence, for the support and perpetuity of our republican system.

In behalf of that system, how numerous and powerful are the motives which appeal to us on an anniversary like this. The tranquility of these academic walks, the circumstances, all of them, under which we assemble, speak to us of a beneficent Government and a prospered country. The experience, too, of every one of us enforces the same lesson with the strength and vividness of a personal conviction.

In what other nation has honest ambition so wide a range, and merit so certain and so brilliant a reward? Where else, in the civ-

lized world, can a virtuous education be so surely obtained, and lead to results of such transcendant worth?

A distinguished illustration of this truth we have present in our own companionship to-day. The youth, whom some of us remember as a student of Chapel Hill in the class of 1818, whose feeble health had threatened to quench his ardent thirst of knowledge, returns to us now, the occupant of the highest political station which is known on earth. We recognise here no distinctions of artificial rank; no claims of lineage; no assumptions of wealth; but we acknowledge that the honors conferred upon our brother-in-letters are reflected back upon our University and ourselves, and we recognise them as the fruit of wise instruction, and as incentives to efforts in others, to whom opportunities are offered, more favorable, even, than were his. We greet him on this auspicious occasion, not alone as the Chief Magistrate of the Republic, but in a more near and friendly relation, as our ancient associate in study, and a graduate, with us, of the same honored institution. Here, where in the bright morning of life he laid, in virtue, in industry, and in science, the deep foundations of his subsequent success, he comes back with us, to pay the sincere homage of gratitude for those early privileges to which he owes so much, and which he can now, more than ever, value as they deserve. In his recollection, as in the memory of us all, this ancient place yet glows with its old attractions, and our affections fondly turn to it, amid the wanderings of earth, with something of youthful ardor, as well as of filial respect. However in other scenes and less tranquil pursuits,

“————— the ear is all unstrung,

“Still, still, it loves the lowland tongue.”

But time, which matures and ripens, also destroys; and as our eyes wander over this assembly, we mourn the absence of many a familiar countenance and many a beloved form. While we ac-

knowledge new and welcome accessions to our number from the youthful graduates of the year, we are compelled to remember that they occupy the seats of earlier companions, who have been swept away in the lapse of years, and who repose now in the silent shadows of the grave. To those of us who were together here thirty years ago, "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*," these mournful recollections come home with peculiar power. Like dim voices of the dead, they speak to us from the chair of the instructor as well as from the bench of the pupil.

" Now kindred merit fills the sable bier ;
Now lacerated friendship claims a tear ;
Year chases year ; decay pursues decay ;
Still drops some joy from withering life away."

And here I should do injustice to the occasion and to my own feelings if I did not pursue this painful theme for a moment, to pay the tribute of my affectionate regard to the memory of him who for so many years, often under most adverse circumstances, but still with signal success, administered the affairs of the University as its presiding officer. No one, I am sure, who has ever shared his counsels or profited by his mild reproofs, can easily forget the wisdom and the virtues of President Caldwell. Uniting extended learning with sound judgment, he possessed the rare and difficult art to temper admonition with kindness, and to render discipline more effectual by making it less repulsive.

" His life was gentle ; and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, ' this was a man.' "

His character and his usefulness—what he was, and what he was enabled to do—suggest a theme, which in this theatre of his labors, and among these witnesses of his fame, it would be a grateful task under other circumstances to pursue. But his own exam-

ple would rebuke us, if we should allow even his merits to turn us aside from contemplating the great objects of his toil. Let us seek rather to understand and to do homage to those vast interests of *enlightened culture* in our own country, which he lived, and, I had almost said, he died to promote.

To this general subject we are invited, not only by the proprieties of the occasion, but by its own intrinsic dignity and worth. In its broad and comprehensive sense, the work of education is the grand business of human life; and in these United States, I need hardly say, it can never be neglected, but at the hazard of consequences which no patriot can contemplate without alarm.

This belief was present with America at its very birth, and stamped upon its rising institutions the great impress of freedom and perpetuity. In the history of other nations, learning has been the slow growth of a society already formed, and has existed, at last, only as the ornament of wealth or the champion of power. But with the Fathers of our Republic, next to religion, it was the first thing thought of; not as a luxury, but as a necessity; not as the handmaid of privilege, but as the nurse of equality; not as the child of endowment or the accident of place, but as the surest basis of public prosperity and of private happiness. They planted knowledge, therefore, in the wilderness; established schools as soon as they builded habitations; and laid the foundations of a University, while yet they were struggling with the ravages of disease and the apprehension of want. More than a century ago the charter governments were celebrated for "promoting letters by free schools and colleges"—and to this feature of their character has been traced the secret of their great success. "Every child born into the world was lifted from the earth by the genius of its country, and in the statutes of the land received, as its political birthright, a pledge of the public care for its morals and its mind."

It has been said that, under a Government like ours, whatever is

gained in politics is lost in learning, and that a nation becomes less truly intelligent by becoming more thoroughly Republican. Yet no country has done so much for learning in so short a time as America. Unexampled as has been its growth in all the elements of physical power, its means of education have multiplied with its advancing population, and gone hand in hand with its increasing wealth. When this institution was founded in 1789 it had not more than ten associate colleges in the whole Union; and many of these, in every thing but the name, were hardly on a level with our modern academies. There are now in the United States at least ten times that number, with an aggregate of nearly eight hundred instructors, an attendance of twelve thousand students, and a library of six hundred and fifty thousand volumes. Independent of these, but laboring in the same field of usefulness, are thirty-four schools of theology, thirty-two of medicine, and eight of law, all of them in successful operation, and some of them munificently provided with the most costly apparatus and most valuable works. The true glory, however, of republican culture is found in those less ambitious nurseries of learning which, scattered broadcast over the Union, extend the opportunities of free instruction to almost every family in America. From the imperfect returns of many of the States, and the different systems adopted in various sections for accomplishing the same end, an accurate summary on this subject cannot well be obtained. Five years ago it was estimated that, in the whole country, there were not less than two millions of pupils, who attended common schools; but a better idea of their extent and influence may be gathered from the statistics of a single State. In New York, there are nearly eleven thousand public schools; not less than half a million of pupils; and district libraries for the use alike of children and adults, comprising in the aggregate more than a million of volumes. In that State, I am aware, the school system has been

the work of many years; but even the system of Ohio, one of the youngest States in the Union, may well attract our astonishment and respect. Here, if any where in the land, considering her late existence and marvellous growth, we might have looked to see the cultivation of mind fatally postponed, if not wholly overwhelmed by the thronging demands of enterprise, and the pressing employments of active life. Yet her constitution declares, in the genuine spirit of the Republic, "that knowledge is essential to good government and human happiness," and that "schools and means of instruction should be encouraged in such a way, as is consistent with freedom of conscience." Acting on the admirable sentiment of this provision, she had established, as long ago as 1840, eighteen colleges and nearly six thousand schools, which were attended by two hundred and twenty-five thousand scholars.

These illustrations evince, at a single glance, the extended interest of our people in the diffusion of knowledge, and the magnificent results which that patriotic interest has achieved. If some States have done less than Ohio for the cause of instruction, there are others which have done more—and all of them, I believe without exception, have recognised its importance by wise constitutional or legal provisions. The public funds set apart for this purpose in the whole Union, including the generous grants of land by the Federal Government, to promote the sales of its public domain, need not shrink from comparison with the boasted literary endowments of Europe; and yet they fall very far short of the entire expenditure in the United States for the education of the young. The cost of private instruction forms of itself an additional item of immense amount, while the grand aggregate is still further increased by the frequent contributions of individual beneficence, for the foundation of libraries, or the improvement of schools. In the field of letters, as every where else in our coun-

try, the great principle of voluntary effort is ceaselessly at work, and constantly rivals, by the energy of its movements and the magnitude of its effects, the most successful action on the part of Government. The exercise of their combined power has pervaded the very heart of the people with the influences of moral and mental culture, and has extended the means of education to every grade of society and every condition of life.

Aided, however, by no combination with the State, the religious teachings of America are the work purely of private beneficence. In the republics of antiquity, religion was only a part of their political system, and the head of the State was also the father of the church. This unnatural connexion, fatal alike to christianity and to liberty, which even yet lingers in the Old World, has been wholly repudiated in the *New*—and the land of Roger Williams and Thomas Jefferson proclaims liberty of conscience from sixty thousand churches, and inculcates virtue and toleration in as many Sabbath schools. Free government is valuable, after all, not so much for any direct exertion of its own power, as for what it permits the people to work out for themselves.

The Press began its work in 1639 : a century afterwards it had earned the prohibition of England, and was strong enough to defy it ; and at this day, it asserts its freedom by an influence which is only not despotic because it is not harmonious. Far outstripping by its enterprise the fertility of our own writers, the American press appropriates unshrinkingly the literary treasures of the whole earth ; while it almost forbids importation of books by the cheapness with which it reprints them, and the facility with which it scatters them among all classes of the reading community. But the most striking displays of its activity and power are only to be witnessed in the field of *Journalism*, where it more than equals France in energy, and knows no other rival throughout the world.

It printed the first newspaper in America in the year 1704 ; in 1828 it had joined an additional number of eight hundred and fifty ; and, at this day, it acts upon the popular mind through the teeming columns of more than two thousand journals. Sharing, as well as stimulating, the progressive spirit of the age, it advances into the wilderness with our hardy pioneers ; keeps company with our commerce among the islands of the sea ; and contends for supremacy with the sword upon every battle-field which is won by our victorious arms. Already it sends us shipping lists from the Sandwich Islands, chronicles the news of the day in La Vera Cruz, and echoes back the thunder of our cannon from the shores of the far Pacific. Becoming thus the missionary as well as the schoolmaster of republicanism, it plants among other nations the seeds of freedom, which it has itself ripened upon our soil ; and having first contributed to the glory of America at home, it crowns its labor of patriotism by making it better known, and therefore more honored, abroad.

With influences such as these, it more than pays back to our country whatever of nurture it has received from it, and richly atones for all the imperfections or abuses by which it so often deserves the reproaches of society, and sometimes seems, almost, to require the censorship of law. The force of enlightened public opinion constitutes, after all, its best restraint, and the only one which would leave to it all its value. Under this guidance, if its teachings are not always pure, they are seldom dangerous ; for its errors are met by truth as soon as they appear, and, like the lance of Achilles, it has the virtue to heal the wounds which it has itself inflicted. In the higher branches of literature, the good which it confers is never doubted ; and if it is less free from censure in its lighter publications, yet its agency even there is on the side of virtue and in favor of liberty. " Were it left to me to decide," writes Mr. Jefferson, " whether we should have a government

without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I would not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." Paradoxical as this may seem, it cannot be doubted that no government can be maintained in the spirit of liberty and purity, without the chastening influences of the newspaper press.

It is sometimes said that a rich source of instruction is closed to us, because America has no monuments; and if by this it is meant that she is not yet marked with the decay of age and the ravages of time, the assertion is strictly true. But unless ruin is more desirable than greatness, and the dim figures of antiquity more precious than the fresh and glowing forms of youth, this feature of her character is rather her glory than her reproach. The monuments of America are not found in the scattered fragments of the dusty past, but point all of them to the rising grandeurs of the far-off future; and while older nations "look back through the twilight of ages that lose themselves in night," the genius of our Republic goes forth in the dawn of morning, to meet and welcome the approach of day. No feudal castles, crumbling upon our hills, attest the ancient violence of robber-lords, and not for us, do the glorious relics of a noble ancestry bear witness, in buried columns and broken arches, to the degenerate spirits of their unworthy sons; but in place of these, and far better than these, we crown our landscapes with contented homes, we build altars to science by the hearthstone of every citizen, and with the spires of thousands of churches we point our children the path to Heaven. While we can preserve, unimpaired to our country, *free instruction, free religion, and a free press*, we need ask no other support for our institutions, and no other witnesses to our fame.

To the means of instruction which have been already mentioned, I should do wrong not to add that other and peculiar education which springs from the very working of our republican system, and from which no member of the community can well escape, even

if he would. Under our policy, every citizen is a part of the Government, and some of its most important duties are periodically devolved upon him, both by law and by necessity. He wields the power of the elective franchise, and determines by his vote the choice alike of measures and of men; not only *who* shall rule him, but *what* shall rule him; he sits in the jury box, and the fortune, the fame, nay, the very life of his neighbor, rest upon his decision; he is called as a witness, and is sworn to give true testimony on questions involving the deepest interests and the most important results; or, by the suffrages of his fellow citizens, he is clothed with still greater trusts, and assumes responsibilities which belong only to the highest stations in the gift of the people. A sovereign in his own right, the symbols of his authority are thus constantly before his eyes, and from every new exercise of his power, the American citizen derives fresh excitement to his intellect, and increased dignity to his character. In all his public acts the double motive presses upon him to ensure reward and to avoid disgrace. Under a free government, he knows full well that, with intelligence and fidelity, there are no plaudits which he may not win, and no prizes of ambition which are above his reach; while, on the other hand, no where else is corruption so inexcusable, and ignorance so wholly out of place. In other countries, where passive obedience is the fruit of despotism, a stolid people is the natural accompaniment of an educated prince; but the genius of our institutions contemplates no such thing as an ignorant man, and deems itself defrauded of its just claims when it finds a citizen faithless to his duty. The large requirements, therefore, of American politics, which are with superficial observers the subject of hasty regret, constitute in reality one of the most valuable features of our republican system, a most affluent source of ennobling instruction, and tend, with inevitable certainty, not only to increase the popular intelligence, but to give energy, expansion, and elevation to the popular mind. Tran-

quility and the repose of exclusive devotion to personal pursuits are not the most favorable elements either for great conceptions or distinguished action. The highest heroism, on the contrary, springs from the strongest excitements; and the period of revolution is also the period of awakened genius. The same causes which break up ancient abuses in society, break up, with equal efficacy, old absurdities in science and in art; and from the still-heaving waves of tumult and reform, emerge side by side the warrior, the statesman, the orator, and the poet. The sublime productions of Milton had their birth in the same times which produced the stormy character of Oliver Cromwell; and the harsh, passionate voice of the one comes softened to our ears by the lofty melody of the other. Amid the fierce passions and new found energies of revolutionary France, Mirabeau and Robespierre announced together the rising fortunes of the "man of destiny." And after convulsions, such as the earth has rarely seen, Napoleon comes upon the stage prepared for him, and writes his name in iron characters, not only upon the history of Europe, but upon the very forehead of the world. The experience of modern times is confirmed upon this subject by all the lessons of antiquity. The home of freedom was every where the dwelling place of letters, and we read the examples of successful genius, not among the subjects of despotic Babylon, but among the democracy of Athens. There was no literary fame, even in Greece, until the era opened of her republican principles; but *then* she became the matchless land of civilization and refinement.

"Where science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all prophetic song,
And music lifted up the listening spirit,
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound,

And human hands first mimicked, and then mocked
 With moulded limbs, more lovely than its own,
 The human form, till marble grew divine."

And the literature of Greece must prove forever the kindling influences of Grecian liberty.

But as no people can continue indefinitely in a state of revolution, these excitations of the popular mind in other ages and other countries, always producing the same noble fruits, have, after a brief and brilliant reign, been as invariably followed by the paralyzing torpor of despotism. It was reserved for our happy country to devise a system, our own incomparable federative system, which, with the liberalizing influences of the Christian religion in freedom and in purity, is constantly instructing and stimulating the popular mind, and developing all the energies of our nature. It is a problem successfully worked out, which justly commands the admiration of the world, equally auspicious to literature and to liberty, and promises blessings to mankind, which the human imagination can hardly conceive. "At this moment, the disastrous and ominous condition of Europe, which men of philosophical enquiry and reflection begin to ascribe to inveterate, radical, and permanent evils of political and social systems, but renders more vivid and dazzling the bright aspects of our manifold prosperity." But this is not the occasion to pursue this train of thought.

Devoted in patriotism, and ever ready to act on the noble principle—*salus Reipublicæ suprema lex*—our countrymen have yet neglected nothing which was calculated to adorn domestic life and promote individual happiness. Female education has, therefore, always been a subject of primary attention.

Elevated to her appropriate position in society; adorned, refined, and accomplished by careful instruction, the *American woman* is the happy companion of the *American freeman*; gladdening his heart by her smile of confidence and love, and cheering him in

his great career of public duty, by her voice of counsel and approbation.

Glorious as our institutions are, their fruit would have turned to ashes, without the lovely association of the softer sex, fitted by education to be the friend, the joy, the pride of American patriots.

If our country, from the very nature of its Government, *demand*s much of its citizens, let us remember that it makes them capable of *doing* much; and that, by giving to them the stimulus and nurture of free institutions, it places within the reach, even of the most humble, the highest attainments of learning and the noblest achievements of mind.

The value of this nurture and of this stimulus is best attested by the great results which they have already accomplished; and thus measured by the standard of results, our whole Republic is but a monument to their praise. Under their influence, constantly cherished and constantly in turn exerted, it has not only maintained successfully its freedom and its power, but it has pursued a career of progress and improvement, which is without a parallel in the history of the world. Fifty-eight years ago it elected its first President. It then embraced a population of little more than three millions, occupying thirteen States, on the Atlantic coast, and covering an area of less than five hundred thousand square miles. Its population has now swelled to more than twenty millions, and it has added nearly a million of square miles to its represented territory. It has more than doubled the number of States, and new sovereignties still form themselves in the wilderness to claim its confederate honors. With this astonishing increase of its numbers and of its peopled and cultivated territory, has grown up, also in a ratio equally rapid, every important interest which can possibly add either to national wealth or national glory. In agriculture, it has invented new implements of industry, and applied them to fresh fields of toil; and from the rich abundance of its gathered harvests,

it not only fills each avenue of want at home, but freights its store-ships with a people's tribute to the famine-stricken children of kingdoms abroad. In commerce, it whitens the very ocean with its enterprise, and exchanges products with every climate under the sun; while in the rapid advancement of its manufactures, it bids fair, at no distant day, to rival even the skill of English industry, and to transfer to this side of the Atlantic the "workshop of the world."

Pursuing with boundless, because unfettered, zeal each opening of *foreign* traffic, it at the same time unites its own territory by constantly extending and improving its means of *internal* intercourse and trade. The remotest inhabitant of the Confederacy is not beyond the reach of its post office, and its civilization travels not only with the marvellous power of wind and steam, but with the speed of electricity, subdued by the art of man, along the lines of its Magnetic Telegraph.

Scarcely more than twenty years ago, it was without a single mile of railroad; in 1836, its iron engines traversed a completed track of sixteen hundred miles, and it has now more miles of railroad than, in the time of Washington, it had of post routes. In proportion to its population, it has more than three times as many canals as England, and more than four times as many as France; and the canal connecting the Hudson with the Lakes, is the longest of these artificial rivers which has been constructed in the world.

In the year 1807, Robert Fulton attracted ridicule by building its first steamboat, and ten years after, it had no regular line of steamboats in all its western waters. They now crowd in hundreds upon its ocean rivers and its inland seas, gathering the rich products of the most remote and land-locked regions of our country, and pouring them into the lap of commerce; they defy every form of danger upon its Atlantic coast; they keep company with its navy against the northers of the Gulf of Mexico; and, under the foster-

ing care of Congress, they will soon cross the Ocean with its mails, and minister to the wants of our ships of war, and protect our merchant marine in every quarter of the globe. A single one of its Western States possesses more steamboats than the whole kingdom of France, and there are said to be as many steamers on Lake Erie as in the Mediterranean sea.

Its increasing means of communication thus keep pace with its extending settlements, and its whole Union is bound together in the strong embraces of mutual intercourse, mutual knowledge, and mutual interest. In this way it administers with facility one Government for twenty-eight sovereignties, and from a single central heart diffuses the healthy life-blood of law and justice through all portions of the body politic. Yet, with us, Paris is not France, and that heart would soon become corrupt, and the stream of sanitary circulation torpid, but for the purifying application of the Federative principle, and the chastening and correcting influences of the subdivisions of power amongst the States and the people, to whom so large a share in the duty of self-government is wisely confided.

The same influences, too, which have thus developed, with almost startling rapidity, the various sources of its physical power, have adorned it at the same time with cheering monuments of its active benevolence, its scientific ingenuity, and its improving taste. Its charities partake, at once, of the vigor of its enterprise and the abundance of its means, and no worthy object ever yet appealed to it in vain. Shrewd and unyielding as it doubtless is in the concerns of trade, it is characterized by the warmest sympathy for human suffering, and the most generous disposition to give it adequate relief. Its capacious heart, sharing something of its broad nationality, has gathered around it none of the iron of avarice or the numbness of exhausted feeling, but never fails to respond with warmth and feeling to the voice of misfortune, no

matter from what clime it comes, or what disaster may have produced it. In our own country it attests the magnitude of its beneficence by its charitable institutions, which attract respect, not only on account of the purposes to which they are devoted, but from their elegant construction and convenient arrangements. Its care of its poor has been censured by foreign writers as so extravagant as to invite pauperism; and with equal bounty it embraces in its ministrations the aged and the sick, the deaf and the dumb, the blind and the lunatic. These institutions, so numerous and so well adapted to their ends, excite our admiration, not so much at their number, as that in so new a country time has been found to establish them. Firm in the maintenance of law, its system of punishments is characterized by christian benevolence, and the pecuniary fines imposed on numerous classes of crimes are devoted to the promotion of education—beautifully taxing vice to support virtue.

If America has not yet equalled older nations by her advances in literature and art, she has at least laid a firm foundation for them; and bright examples of generous attainment and lofty intellect are not even now wanting among her cultivated citizens. Her statesmanship has been proved in the strictest school of diplomacy; and her public speaking, in true eloquence, will not suffer from comparison with that of any other country. In history, in painting, and in sculpture, in poetry, in the eloquence of the pulpit, in the severe reasoning of the bench, and in the imposing diction of Senatorial elocution, our country has produced successful competitors for a companionship with the most gifted sons of genius in other regions of the world.

But, whatever may be thought of its literature and its taste, its contributions to science and to mechanics can never be regarded as deficient, either in number or in value. Its discoveries in electricity, in galvanism, and in the application of steam, are as brilliant

in theory as they are useful in results, and thousands of models in our Patent office bear witness that the genius which invented the cotton gin, and new moulded the commerce of the world, is still rife among the countrymen of Eli Whitney. In mathematics, in mineralogy, in geology, and in chemistry, the profound researches of our countrymen have added to the national character, and increased the means of social happiness.

Trammelled by no fetters of ignorance or superstition, the American child of genius "comes forth with freedom into the glowing sunlight of philosophy, as the servant and interpreter of nature; he looks abroad into the rich and magnificent universe, calls the delightful scenery all his own—the mountains, the valleys, the ocean, the rivers, and the sky; through these wide bounds he is free at will to choose—

Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the water or the ambient air.

All present him with perfect instances of the consummate wisdom of the Almighty God, who created a world so fraught with beauty; and by their examination he gains materials, which not only enlighten and adorn, but exalt and purify his mind, teaching him to appreciate the miraculous workings of an omnipotent and eternal Power."

But confederate America, after all, is not yet a century old; and it is unjust, therefore, to measure her attainments by the ripened knowledge which with other nations has been the accumulation of centuries. The first condition of progress in every department of learning is to appreciate its value, and this condition, at least, she has generously fulfilled. There is no object of mental improvement at all worthy of human pursuit, upon which, in some form or other, she has not set the seal of her approval; and her elevation, it should be remembered, is not shown by the bright achievements of an isolated class, but by the liberal culture of a whole people.

Without any deductions for her deficiencies, she has done enough already to fix the gratitude of her citizens, and to challenge the admiration of the world. And yet, she is but in the morning of her existence; and brilliant as now is her star, it has only entered upon the radiant career which it is destined under Providence yet to accomplish. Her population, her wealth, her intellect, and her power, are all of them in the germ only of their first development, and are pressing forward to an expansion, whose majestic grandeur it is difficult for the mind to realize. When we consider her sparseness of population, her vacant territory, her favored position, her unrivalled Government, and remember the momentum which she has received from the past, and the increased energy which she must acquire from every succeeding step of her onward march, we are ready to believe nothing impossible in her future greatness.

It would be vain to expect that the work of mere human hands, requiring the agency of human means, should attain successful results, without sometimes exhibiting the imperfections of its authors, and the infirmities of their nature.

In the progress of our experiment of self-government, we have encountered dangers which appeared to threaten failure, and which were exultingly hailed by the enemies of freedom as the sure sign that our Federal Union, the prolific source of all our blessings, would prove but a "rope of sand." Through these dangers we have successfully passed. Others must await us.

We know

"There is a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we may,"

and we will not despair of the Republic; always remembering that, if in the collisions of interest, the wickedness of fanaticism, or the frenzy of party, we recur to those feelings of fraternal affection, forbearance, and conciliation, and to those great principles

of justice and respect for the rights of all, which animated our fathers, we will not fail to secure the perpetuity of our institutions.

The magnitude of our country's destiny must depend, however, under Providence, upon the virtue and intelligence of her individual citizens; and to all of us, therefore, she addresses the solemn appeal of patriotism and humanity. While, therefore, we endeavor to appreciate as it deserves our glorious heritage of liberty and happiness, let us also appreciate the vast responsibility by which it is accompanied! Living under the only free government on earth, upon us are concentrated the dearest political hopes of man. Wherever glitters the crown of despotism, or faintly throbs the heart of freedom—wherever toil goes unrewarded, or human right is crushed beneath oppression—from patriots of all climes, and the oppressed of every land—come blended to our ears, voices alike of warning and entreaty; all invoking us to be faithful to our holy trust, and to preserve it sacredly for the civil redemption of the world. The voices of the past come mingled with the voices of the present, and amid the graves of fallen empires, and the splendid ruins of departed greatness, we gather anew the solemn lesson of individual duty. Let us receive it with submission, and reverence, and awe; and let it increase the warmth of our patriotism, the earnestness of our virtue, and the devotedness of our toil. If we would discharge aright the duty which we owe to our country and to mankind, let us begin by discharging aright the duty which we owe ourselves.

“ This above all, to thine own self be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

